

# BILLESDON COPLOW.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24th. 1800.

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"QUEQUE IPSE MISERRIMA VIDI,  
ET QUORUM PARS MAGNA FUI."

J. R. Lorie

WITH the wind at north-east, forbiddingly keen,  
The COPLOW OF BILLESDON ne'er witness'd, I ween,  
Two hundred such Horses and Men, at a Burst,  
All determin'd to ride,—each resolv'd to be first.  
But to get a good Start over-eager and jealous,  
Two-thirds, at the least, of these very fine fellows,  
So crowded, and hustled, and jostled, and cross'd,  
That they rode the wrong way, and at starting were lost.

In spite of th' unpromising state of the weather,  
Away broke the Fox, and the Hounds close together;  
A Burst up to Tilton so brilliantly ran,  
Was scarce ever seen in the mem'ry of man.  
What Hounds guided scent, or which led the way,  
Your Bard—to their names quite a Stranger—can't say;  
Tho', their names had he known, he is free to confess,  
His Horse could not shew him, at such a Death-Pace.  
Villiers, Cholmondely, and Forester, made such sharp play,  
Not omitting Germain, never seen till to-day;  
Had you judg'd of these Four by the trim of their pace,  
At Bib'ry you'd thought they'd been riding a Race.  
But these Hounds with a Scent—how they dash & they fling!  
To o'er-ride them, is quite the impossible thing.  
Disdaining to hang in the Wood—thro' he raced,  
And the Open for Skeffington gallantly faced,  
Where headed, and foil'd, his first point he forsook,  
And merrily led them a dance o'er the Brook.

Pass'd

Pafs'd Galby and Norton, great Stretton and small,  
 Right onward still sweeping to old Stretton Hall:  
 Where Two Minutes Check, serv'd to shew, at one ken,  
 The extent of the havoc 'mongst Horses and Men.  
 Such fighting, such sobbing, such trotting, such walking,—  
 Such reeling, such halting, of Fences such baulking,—  
 Such a Smoke in the Gaps, such comparing of Notes,—  
 Such quizzing each other's daub'd breeches and coats;  
 Here a Man walk'd afoot who his Horse had half kill'd,  
 There you met with a Steed who his Rider had spill'd.  
 In short, such Dilemmas, such Scrapes, such distress,  
 One Fox ne'er occasion'd, *the knowing* confess.  
 But alas! the Dilemmas had scarcely began—  
 On for Wigston and Ayleston he resolute ran,  
 Where a few of the stoutest now slacken'd and panted,  
 And many were seen irretrievably planted.  
 The high-road to Leicester the Scoundrel then cross'd,  
 As *Tell-Tale* ( *a.* ) and *Beaufremont* ( *b.* ) found to their cost;  
 And *Villiers* esteem'd it a serious bore,  
 That no longer could *Shuttlecock* ( *c.* ) fly as before.  
 Even *Joe Miller's* ( *d.* ) spirit of Fun was so broke,  
 That *He* ceas'd to consider the Run as a *Joke*.  
 Then streaming away, o'er the River he splash'd—  
*Germain*, close at hand, off the bank *Melon* ( *e.* ) dash'd.  
 Why the *Dun* prov'd so stout, in a scamper so wild,  
 Till now he had only been rode by a *Child*. ( *f.* )  
 After Him plung'd *Joe Miller* with *Musters* so slim,  
 Who twice sunk, and nearly paid dear for his Whim, }  
 Not reflecting that all *Water-Melons* must swim.  
 Well fous'd by their dip, on they brush'd o'er the bottom,  
 With liquor on board enough to besot 'em:

But

- ( *a.* ) Mr. Forester's Horse.  
 ( *b.* ) Mr. Madocks's Horse.  
 ( *c.* ) Lord Villiers's Horse.  
 ( *d.* ) Mr. Musters's Horse.  
 ( *e.* ) Mr. Germain's Horse.

( *f.* ) Formerly the property of Mr. Child, to whom this Hunt is per-  
 haps originally indebted for the present spirited Style of riding to Hounds.





But the Villain no longer at all at a loss,  
 Stretch'd away like a Devil for ENDERBY GORSE.  
 Where meeting with many a Brether and Cousin,  
 Who knew how to dance a good Hay in the Furzen,  
*Jack Raven* ( *g.* ) at length coming up on a Hack,  
 Whom a Farmer had lent him—whipp'd off the game Pack.  
 Running fulky, Old *Loadstone* ( *h.* ) the Stream would not swim,  
 No longer Sport proving a *Magnet* to him.

Of Mistakes, and Mishaps, and what each Man befell,  
 Would the Muse could with justice Poetical tell!  
*Bob Grosvenor* on *Plush* ( *i.* )—tho' determin'd to ride—  
 Lost, at first, a good Start, and was soon set aside;  
 Tho' he charg'd hill and dale, not to lose this rare Chace,  
 On *Velvet*—*Plush* could not get footing alas!

To Tilton sail'd bravely *Sir Wheeler O'Cuff*--  
 Where neglecting, thro' hurry, to keep a good Luff,  
 To Leeward he drifts---how provoking a case!  
 And was forc'd, tho' reluctant, to give up the Chace.

As making his way to the Pack's not his *Forte*,  
*Sir Lawley*, ( *j.* ) as usual, lost half of the sport.  
 But then the profess'd Philosophical Creed,  
 That " *All's for the best*"—of Master *Candide*,  
 If not comfort *Sir R.* — reconcile may at least—  
 For on *this* supposition—his Sport is the best.


*Orby Hunter*, who seem'd to be hunting his Fate,  
 Got Falls, to the tune of no fewer than *Eight*.

*Basan's King* ( *k.* ) upon *Glimpse*, ( *l.* ) sadly out of condition--  
 Pull'd up, to avoid of being tir'd the suspicion.  
 He did right—for *Og* very soon found,  
 His *worst* had he done—he'd have scarce glimps'd a Hound.

A 3.

Charles

( *g.* ) The name of the Huntsman.( *h.* ) The Huntsman's Horse.( *i.* ) Mr. Robt.<sup>d</sup> Grosvenor's Horse.( *j.* ) Sir Robert Lawley—not unusually, in the brief dialect of Melton,  
 call'd Sir Lawley.( *k.* ) Mr. Oglander—who, according to the same dialect, goes by the  
 more familiar appellation of Og.( *l.* ) Mr. Oglander's Horse.

Charles Meynell who lay very well with the Hounds,  
 Till of Stretton he nearly arriv'd at the bounds,  
 Now discover'd that *Waggoner* ( *m.* ) rather would creep,  
 Than exert his great prowess in taking a Leap.  
 But when crossing the Turnpike he read "  Put on here"—  
 'Twas enough to make any one bluster and swear.  
 The *Waggoner* feeling familiar the Road,  
 Was resolv'd not to quit it,—so stock still he stood.  
 Yet prithee, dear *Charles*! why rash vows will you make—  
 Thy leave of old *Billesdon* ( *n.* ) to finally take?  
 Since from *Segg's Hill* ( *o.* ) for instance, or p'haps *Melton Spinney*,  
 If they go a good pace—you are *beat* for a Guinea.

'Tis Money, they say, makes the Mare to go kind—  
 The Proverb has vouch'd for this, time out of mind;  
 But tho' of this truth you admit the full force,  
 It may not hold so good, of every *Horse*.

If it did, *Ellis Charles* need not hustle and hug,  
 By Name, not by Nature, his favourite *Slug*. ( *p.* )  
 Yet *Slug as he is*——the whole of this Chace  
 Charles ne'er cou'd have seen, had he gone a *Snail's pace*.

Old *Gradus*, ( *q.* ) whose fretting and fuming at first,  
 Disqualifies strangely for such a tight Burst,  
 E'er to Tilton arriv'd, ceas'd to pull and to crave,  
 And tho' freshish at Stretton, he stepp'd a *Pas grave*;  
 Where in turning him over a cramp kind of place,  
 He overturn'd *George*, whom he threw on his face:  
 And on foot to walk home it had sure been his fate,  
 But that soon he was caught, and tied up to a gate.

Near Wigston occur'd a most singular joke,  
*Captain Miller* averr'd that his Leg he had broke,—  
 And bemoan'd in most piteous expressions, how hard,  
 By so cruel a fracture, to have his sport marr'd.

( *m.* ) Mr. Charles Meynell's Horse.

( *n.* ) He had threatened never again to attempt following the Hounds  
 from Billesdon, as no Horse could carry his weight up to them in *that* part  
 of the Country.

( *o.* ) A very different part of the Hunt.

( *p.* ) Mr. Charles Ellis's Horse

( *q.* ) Mr. George Ellis's Horse.

In quizzing his Friends he felt little remorse,  
 To *finesse the compleat doing up of his Horse*.  
 Had he told a long story of losing a Shoe,  
 Or of laming his Horse, he very well knew  
 That the *Leicestershire Creed*, out this Truism worms,  
 " *Lost Shoes, and dead beat, are Synonymous terms.*" ( *r.* )  
 So a Horse must here learn, whatever he does—  
 To die game—as at *Tyburn*—and " *die in his Shoes.*"

Bethel Cox, and Tom Smith, Messieurs Bennet and Hawke,  
 Their Nags all contriv'd to reduce to a walk.

Spinney, Maynard's Lord, who detests competition and strife,  
 As well in the Chace, as in social Life,  
 Than whom nobody harder has rode in his time,  
 But to *crane* ( *s.* ) now and then, now thinks it no crime—  
 That he beat some crack Riders most fairly may crow,  
 For he *liv'd* to the end, tho' he scarcely knows *how*.

With Snaffle and Martingale kept in the rear,  
 His Horses mouth open half up to his ear,  
 Mr. Wardle, who threat'ned great things over night, ( *t.* )  
 Beyond Stretton was left in most terrible plight.  
 Too lean to be prefs'd, yet egg'd on by compulsion,  
 No wonder his Nag tumbled into convulsion.  
 Ah! had he but lost a fore Shoe, or fell lame,  
 'Twould only his *Sport* have curtail'd, not his *Fame*. ( *u.* )

Lorraine, ( *v.* ) than whom no one his game plays more safe,  
 Who the last than the first prefers seeing by half—

What

( *r.* ) Indeed so implicit is this article of the Meltonian belief, that many a Horse, in addition to the misfortune of breaking his hoof from losing his shoe, has laboured likewise under the afore said unavoidable imputation, to his everlasting disgrace.

In ( *s.* ) *Crane*—The term derives it's origin from the necessary *extension of neck* of such Sportsmen as dare to incur the reproach, by venturing " *to look before they leap.*"

Hounds that part ( *t.* ) Who was said to have threat'ned, that he would beat the whole Field the next day.

( *u.* ) For which express purpose, more than *Sport*, some are *silly* enough to suppose he hunts; and which, tho' he did actually succeed in, in one instance some Seasons ago, he probably never will do again, having threatned it frequently since, with as little success.

( *v.* ) Mr. Lorraine Smith.



What with *Nicking*, (w.) and keeping a constant look out,  
Every turn of the Scent surely turn'd to account.

The wonderful pluck of his Horse surpris'd some,  
But he knew they were making *point blank* for his home.

"Short home" to be brought we all should desire,  
Could we manage the trick like the *Enderby Squire*. (x.)

Wild Shelley (y.) at starting, all ears, and all eyes,  
Who to get a good Start all experiments tries,  
Yet contriv'd it so ill, as to throw out poor *Gipsy*, (z.)  
Whom he rattled along as if he'd been tipsey  
To catch them again, but tho' famous for speed,  
She never could *touch* (1.) them, much less *get a lead*. (2.)  
So, disheart'ned, (3.) disjointed, and beat, home he swings,  
Not much unlike a Fidler hung upon strings.

An H. H. (4.) who in Leicestershire never had been,  
So of course such a *Tickler* (5.) ne'er could have seen;  
Just to see them throw off, on a *raw* (6.) Horse was mounted,  
Who a Hound had ne'er seen, or a Fence had confronted.

But

(w.) A term of great *reproach*, according to the above dialect, to those who are so shabby as to *cut across* to the Hounds, when it is esteem'd so much more *honourable* to follow their very track; by which *spirited* line of conduct, they may be pretty certain of never seeing them at all.

(x.) Where Mr. Lorraine Smith lives.

(y.) Sir John Shelley—Wild with *joy upon these occasions* must be here meant, as no one can be, personally, more *serious and sedate*—Indeed, if the worthy Baronet has a *Foible*, it is—Gravity.

(z.) Sir John Shelley's Mare.

(1.) *Touch*—Meaning according to the Melton dialect, *overtake*.

(2.) *Get a lead*—By which is to be understood, securing the *privilege* of breaking your neck *first*, and when you fall, of being rode over by a hundred and ninety-nine of the best fellows upon Earth, to a *dead* certainty.

(3.) Nor can that astonish any one, when it is considered, what an *inestimable privilege* he has lost.

(4.) It is not quite clear whether these initials are meant to apply to a *Hampshire Hog*, or the *Hampshire Hunt*. If to the Hog, it does not appear that he saved his Bacon.

(5.) *Tickler*—(*Meltonice*) a Run so severe, that there is no laughing at it.

(6.) *Raw*—(*Ibid.*) A Horse who knew nothing of the business he was going about—or wished to know.

But they found in such Style, (7.) & went off at such Score, (8)  
 That he could not resist the attempt to see more:  
 So with scrambling, (9) & dashing, (10) & one rattling fall, (11)  
 He saw all the Fun, up to Stretton's white Hall.  
 There they anchor'd—in plight not a little distressing—  
 The Horse being *raw*, he of course got a *dress*ing.

That wonderful Mare of *Vanneck's*, who till now,  
 By no chance ever tir'd, (12.) was taken in tow:  
 And what's worse, she gave *Van* such a devilish jog  
 In the face with her head, plunging out of a Bog,  
 That with Eye black as ink, or as Edward's fam'd Prince,  
 Half blind has he been, and quite deaf ever since.  
 "But let not that mortify Thee, Shackaback"—(13.)  
 She only was *blown* (14.) and came home a rare Hack.

There

(7.) *Style*, means the best possible manner of doing any thing. As for instance, when a Man rides his Horse full speed at double Posts and Rails with a *Squire-Trap* on the other side, (which is a *moderate* ditch of about two yards wide cut on purpose to break Gentlemen's necks—he is then reckoned, at *Melton*, to have rode at it *in Style*—especially if he is caught in the said *Squire-Trap*.

(8.) *Score*, means that kind of *Pace*, which perhaps neither you nor your Horse ever went before, and if you have not more luck than falls to the share of every first experiment of the kind, 'tis ten to one but he falls, before he can (what *They* call) *get on his legs*—in which case you may rest perfectly satisfied that he must roll over you two or three times at least, before he can stop himself.

(9.) *Scrambling* means, when a Horse does not leave above *Three* of his Legs behind him, and *saves* himself by pitching on his head.

(10.) *Dashing* means, when a Man *charges* a Fence (which no other word can express so fully) on the other side of which it is impossible to guess what mischief awaits him, but where his getting a Fall is reduced as nearly as possible, to a *moral certainty*.

(11.) *Ratling fall*—Q. E. D.

(12.) Which if other proof were wanting, ascertains *beyond any thing else*, the severity of this Chace.

(13.) A familiar appellation, borrow'd from *Blue Beard*, and bestowed by his friends at *Melton* on Mr. *Vanneck*, than which nothing can more thoroughly prove the estimation in which his Society is held there, since none but good *Fellows* are ever esteemed, according to the *Meltonian* principles, worthy of a nick name.

(14.) Which was *his own* observation, the merit of which I would scorn to assume, but for the truth of which (at least the *latter* assertion) I can vouch, as I perfectly agree with him that I never saw a more *compleat Hack*, tho' he is pleased to call her a Hunter.



There *Craven* too stopp'd—whose misfortune, not fault,  
His Mare unaccountably vex'd with *String-halt*, ( 15 )  
And when she had ceas'd thus *Spasmodic* to prance,  
Her Mouth 'gan to twitch with *St. Vitus's dance*. ( 15. )

But how shall describ'd be the fate of *Rose Price*? ( 16. )  
Whose fav'rite white Gelding convey'd him so nice  
Thro' thick and thro' thin, that he vow'd and protested, ( 17 )  
No Money should part them, as long as Life lasted.  
But *the Pace* ( 18. ) that effected, which Money could not :  
For to part—and in Death ! was their no distant lot.  
In a fatal blind ditch *Carlo Khan's* ( 19. ) powers fail'd,  
Where nor *Lancet*, ( 20. ) nor *Laudanum* ( 20. ) either avail'd.  
More care ( 21. ) of a Horse than he took, could take no Man—  
He'd more *Straw* than would serve any lying-in Woman.  
Still he died !—yet just *how*, as nobody knows,  
It may truly be said,—He died “ *under the Rose*.”  
At the death of poor *Khan, Melton* ( 22. ) feels such remorse,  
That they've christen'd that Ditch—the *Vale of White Horse* !

Thus

( 15. ) ( 15. ) Two nervous affections, in every sense of the word *very distressing*, especially to a bye-stander who cannot command his risible muscles upon so *melancholy* an occasion.

( 16. ) A Gentleman, of whom it has been *erroneously* said, that he never returned from Hunting, but his Horse was sure to be either *lame* or *knock'd up*.

( 17. ) At the Cover side, his Horse had been particularly admired, & a considerable Sum of Money offered for him.

( 18. ) Which is a complete answer to that impertinent question, so vauntingly asked by a favorite Poet, when he exclaims—in language indeed somewhat *bald*—“ Pray what can do that, which Money can not ?”

( 19. ) The name of *Poor Mr. Price's Horse*.

( 20. ) ( 20 ) Two excellent Restoratives where the Patient is not too far gone—Where he is (as in the present case,) inimitable Soporifics.

( 21. ) Indeed it is only to be lamented, that Mr. P. had not taken rather more care of him *a little earlier* in the day, which probably would have obviated the necessity of this *Accouchment*.

( 22. ) Which redounds highly to the credit and the *Sympathy* of the *Melton* Gentlemen, and completely refutes a very ill natur'd but *groundless* supposition, that their sensibility will ever suffer them to make a *joke* of any such heavy loss a Gentleman may happen to sustain, especially if the Gentleman likewise happens to be *heavy himself*, which, of course, doubles the weight of the misfortune.



Thus ended a Chace, which for distance and speed,  
 It's fellow we never have heard of, or read.  
 Every species of ground, ev'ry Horse does not suit,  
 What's a good Country ( 23. ) Hunter, may here prove a Brute;  
 And unless for all sorts of strange Fences prepar'd,  
 A Man and his Horse are sure to be scared.  
 This Variety gives constant *Life* to the Chace;  
 But as *Forester* ( 24. ) says—" Sir, what KILLS, is the *PAGE*." (25)  
 In most other Countries, they boast of their breed,  
 For carrying, at times, such a beautiful *Head*; ( 26. )  
 But these Hounds to carry a *Head* cannot fail,  
 And constantly too— for by George there's—no *Tail*. ( 26. )  
 Talk of Horses, and Hounds, and the System of Kennel—  
 Give me *Leicestershire Nags*—& the Hounds of OLD MEYNELL!

( 23. ) As every *Country Gentleman* may not comprehend the force of this expression, he ought to know, that the *Meltonians*, hold every Horse who cannot "*Go along a flapping pace*,"—" *Stay at that pace*,"—" *Skim ridge and furrow*"—" *Catch his Horses*"—" *Top a flight of Rails*"—" *Come well into the next field*"—" *Charge an Ox Fence*"—" *Go in and out clever*"—" *Face a Brook*"—" *Swift at a Rasper*"—and in short—" *Do all that kind of thing*"—which are all so plain and intelligible, that it's impossible to mistake their meaning,—that Horse is held in the same contempt in *Leicestershire*, as a *Coxcomb* holds a *Country Bumpkin*. In vulgar Countries ( *i. e.* all others ) where these accomplishments are not indispensable, he may be a Hunter.

( 24. ) A Gentleman who *practically explains* all the above accomplishments to the great edification of young Horses, and the no less *astonishment of weak minds*.

( 25. ) A favourite maxim of Mr. *Forester's*, of the truth of which, he seldom loses an opportunity of endeavouring to make his Friends *thoroughly sensible*.

( 26. ) As Heads and Tails are not here to be understood in the common acceptation of the words, and as all Ladies are not Sportswomen enough to be aware that they have no reference to the Human Head or Tail—they should know, that when you can "*cover the Hounds with a Sheet*" (which any *Meltonian* will explain to them more particularly) they are then said to carry a *beautiful Head*. When, on the contrary, they follow the Leader in a line, like a flight of wild fowl, they are then said—to *Tail*.

*J. Boulter* for

*Mat. Lee*. ( Clementson, Printer, Melton. )





